

# The ROCKY RIDGE REVIEW

PREMIER ISSUE!

Summer, 1993

Laura Ingalls Wilder - Rose Wilder Lane Home Association, Mansfield, Missouri 65704



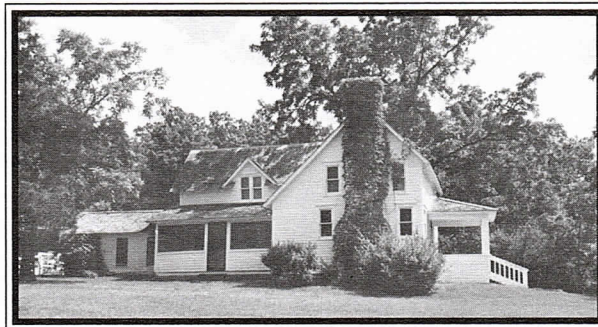
## Special Dedication

Within the past year, the Laura Ingalls Wilder Home Association has lost two vibrant members to cancer. They are **Joe Coday**, who served the Association in many capacities as a board member and officer, and **Connie Tidwell**, curator from 1988 - 1993. Their talents, dedication and enthusiasm impacted the work of the Association greatly and the absence of their presence is keenly felt. Both Joe and Connie were involved in preliminary discussions and planning for our new membership program and this newsletter. This premiere issue is dedicated especially to them.

## FIVE YEARS OF PROGRESS ON ROCKY RIDGE FARM

The house was literally loved to death. Since 1957, hundreds of thousands of happy readers have walked through the Wilder Home on Rocky Ridge Farm, which was completed back in 1913. The stress and strain, plus the natural deterioration, had left the house in a state much different from the way Laura and Almanzo knew it. In addition, concerns for safety, preservation and visitor comfort were acute.

In 1988, the Laura Ingalls Wilder Home Association Board started an investigation to determine what could be afforded in the way of restoration. Funds were limited, but a start was considered necessary. Year by year, here are the highlights:



The historic home where the "Little House" Books were written.

### 1989

10' x 40' highway billboards went up along Missouri highways picturing the Wilder Home, and promotional brochures were distributed on a wide scale to inform the public of Mansfield's historic site. This signaled the marked and ever-increasing volume of visitation. The Little House Bookstore opened in the white frame building next to the museum, offering books and related items for purchase by visitors, and also by mail. Repairs and cosmetic touches were started on the Wilder Home.

### 1990

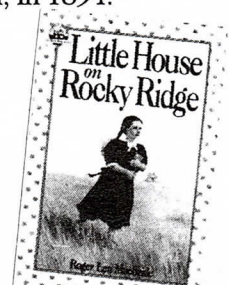
Heating and cooling, along with a Halon fire prevention system was installed in the Home. This was done in an unobtrusive manner, with the new system being tucked into a closet in the Home's upstairs. Vents and piping were also minimal. The even temperature is a preservation point and also adds comfort for the staff and visitors. The entire upstairs floor was

Continued on Page 2

## ROCKY RIDGE FARM FEATURED AS SETTING FOR NEW SERIES

With the publication of *Little House on Rocky Ridge*, HarperCollins Children's Books is proud to announce the launch of a brand new series based on the life and writings of Rose Wilder Lane. Faithful in tone and character to the original Little House series, the Rocky Ridge Books fictionalize Rose's childhood in much the same way as the Little House Books dramatize Laura's early years — with historically documented accounts of her life.

Using original diaries, letters, unpublished manuscripts, and memoirs, Roger MacBride answers the questions asked by millions of Little House fans: What happened next to Laura, her husband Almanzo, and their little daughter Rose? Picking up right where *The First Four Years*, the last of the original nine books by Laura, ends *Little House on Rocky Ridge* tells the continuing story of the Wilders' travels by covered wagon from DeSmet, South Dakota, to their new home in Mansfield, Missouri, in 1894.



In the *Little House on Rocky Ridge*, readers are drawn in immediately by the accounts of Laura, Almanzo, and Rose's adventures. Like other families, the Wilders seek a new home where the rapid advance of progress brings train lines and electricity, telephones and prosperity. They settle on Rocky Ridge Farm, where

Continued on Page 2



## GOLDEN YEARS IS FIFTY



*Sketch from 1943 edition of  
These Happy Golden Years*

1993 marks the fiftieth anniversary of *These Happy Golden Years*' first publication. It was, like the entire set of "Little House" Books, written here on Rocky Ridge Farm. The last of the original eight volumes, it marked Laura's retirement (at age 76) from active writing.

Here at the museum, a number of artifacts relating to the plots of *These Happy Golden Years* are on display. These include Laura's teaching certificates and contract, singing school books, wedding china and silver, lace presented to Laura on her wedding day, family Bible and other items associated with the Wilder's early married life.

**Rocky Ridge** Continued from Page 1

the difficulties and rewards of their life in the Ozark Mountains make for stories every bit as vivid and involving as the stories in the Little House Books.

Author Roger Lea MacBride, lifelong friend of Rose Wilder Lane and heir to her estate, has successfully reconstructed the next generation of Little House adventures, capturing both the flavor of the original books and the authenticity of Rose's own writings. The result is a series truly worthy of the Laura Ingalls Wilder legacy and a proud addition to HarperCollins Children's Books' longstanding relationship with the Little House heritage.

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© 1993 by the LIW-RWL Home Association  
Check pattern on front page streamer is duplicated from flyleafs of original Harper & Brothers editions of the Wilder books and favored by Laura. Special thanks to Larry Dennis for photography assistance.

## EVERYBODY'S FRIEND, CONNIE TIDWELL

For five happy, hectic and busy years, 1988 - 1993, Curator Connie Tidwell ran the helm of the fast expanding Wilder Home and Museum. Her enthusiasm, energy and capacity to dream great dreams for the Wilder home site impacted the location in dozens of ways.

On March 10, 1993, the Wilder Association and the larger world of Wilder friends, lost the sparky advocate, planner, doer and dreamer. After a brief illness, she died while visiting family in Austin, Texas. Connie came to the Wilder Association after retirement from a long and varied career in education, in Methodist ministry (her husband is a retired pastor) and non-profit management. She coupled those experiences with a love for people, intense curiosity about the Wilder home and its former residents and a desire to make the site all it could be. She endeared herself to her new community of Mansfield, to many in the museum world, to tourists and all readers of the "Little House" books with whom she came in contact.

Her lively and welcoming spirit injected itself into many corners of Rocky Ridge Farm; visitors responded to the friendly reception.



Connie's dream of increasing the visitor services and an appreciation of the site's historic qualities was an ever-evolving reality.

She said she had "caught the dream". She was infected with that quality that Wilder readers know so well: delight in the people, places and ideals of the Wilder writings. Her genuine delight in searching out obscure facts and puzzling together hints about the historic house was a quality she shared freely.

A special interest and appreciation of Rose Wilder Lane developed for Connie early in her association with the museum. She would like to be remembered for this, and urge others to investigate the principles and accomplishments of Rose's life.

To borrow a line from Rose: "The longest lives are short; our work lasts longer." This is an appropriate description of Connie's fore-shortened stay. But how she packed meaning and memories into her stop on Rocky Ridge Farm!

She will be remembered with pleasure by those who encountered her as "keeper of the flame" on Rocky Ridge Farm.

**Five Years of Progress** Continued from Page 1



*Upstairs restoration in process.*

removed and steel support beams were installed. Original flooring was replaced, leaving the work virtually undetected.

Downstairs rooms were repainted in the original colors and the oak woodwork was polished and touched-up. Several of the antique lamps were repaired and re-wired and Laura's condiment castor was restored. The long and costly project of producing exact replica wallpaper for the kitchen and Laura's study was started. The bathroom was refinished and opened for view.

New electrical wiring and the fire-prevention system added an element of safety; later a similar fire-prevention system was installed within the museum building.

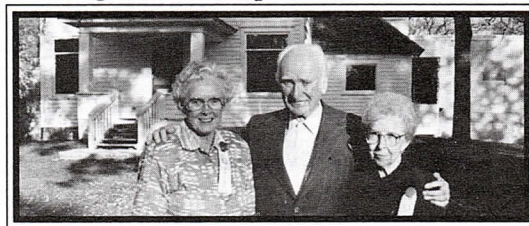
In October, the board purchased nearly fifty additional acres of the original Wilder farm, which included the 1928 rock house built by Rose for her parents. They resided there approximately nine years. This purchase acquired a second "Little House"

of significance, and a mortgage for the Association.

**1991**

A number of preservation details were attended to in both the Home and Museum. Replicated draperies were completed for the Wilder Home to replace the badly worn originals.

Under the direction of curator Connie Tidwell, a complete renovation of the Wilder Museum was achieved. The museum was carpeted, entrance and traffic areas re-vamped, showcases revised and interpretive signs completely re-tooled into a uniform type and design. The Rose Wilder Lane wing was totally re-designed by Curator Tidwell and Rose's life and career took on new meaning through the reinterpretation.



*Garth Williams with Board members  
Jane Decker (left) and Juanita Parker.*

On October 12, the highlight was "Garth Williams Day" at the Museum. This marked the first visit to the Wilder Home for the illustrator since his visit to Laura and Almanzo in 1947. Large crowds

Continued on Page 5



## FROM THE BOARD MEMBERS

The Laura Ingalls Wilder Home Association is administered by a group of seven board members who meet at least twice yearly to make important decisions regarding the Wilder home and its activities. To acquaint members old and new with the Association's board, the members have prepared these updates...

*Association president Jean Coday serves two entities named for Laura Ingalls Wilder: the Home and Museum and Mansfield Elementary School. She is a veteran teacher/counselor and is currently principal at Wilder Elementary.*

### LET ME SHARE WITH YOU

I wish to extend greetings to all members of the Association. When asked to write for this newsletter I was a little skeptical. However, as I began I found it quite a treat to take out my memories and examine and savor them, before looking toward the future. Let me share with you.

In 1960 my husband and I, along with our two little boys, moved to Mansfield from Ponca City, Oklahoma. Joe was coming to his home town to become the fourth generation to work in the bank managed by his family since 1892. The boys and I would make it our home town also.

Joe seemed to know everyone, but I had many to meet. One of the first persons with whom I became acquainted was Irene Lichty. We found we had something in common, a love of the "Little House" books and an interest in preserving the Wilder home and memorabilia. Irene and her husband, Lewis, were active in the newly-formed Association and asked Joe and me to join. This was our pleasure, and the beginning of a wonderful relationship with other Association members dedicated to maintaining the property and the Wilder treasures.

As our boys grew, and we added a little girl to our family, the Laura Ingalls Wilder/Rose Wilder Lane Home Association grew too. The first addition after Joe and I were elected to the board was a curator's home. Mrs. Lane was a very generous giver, and the board and Association tried to be gracious receivers. The Lichtys moved into their new home, and plans proceeded for the museum. Board member Roger MacBride was instrumental in the museum's becoming a reality, both financially and in the giving of many of Mrs. Lane's belongings to the Association. Many months and lots of hard work brought the building to completion, and it was dedicated in June 1971.

Many years have passed and I believe that all Rocky Ridge buildings, museum artifacts, grounds, and other Association responsibilities, have been well cared for and improved. Juanita Parker and Edward Parker were loyal, hard-working board members, and Juanita continues today. Our wonderful Connie Tidwell came as curator in 1988 and she continued the work started by Irene, Lewis and later David LeCount.

We have seen the growth continue during the past five years. The parking area and old book store building across the highway, and the rock house property east of the original Rocky Ridge have been purchased. An Association owned and managed book store is now a reality, and last year the original Wilder home became registered

as a historic landmark by the U.S. Department of Interior. How wonderful for the memory of Laura, Almanzo and Rose!

Hopefully the next few years will bring even more change and improvement here so that future generations of children can visit Laura's home, see the treasures, and all the while make a connection with by-gone days and their own heritage.



*The Board proudly boasts one member who has been involved since the beginning of the Association's work in 1957. She is Secretary, Juanita Parker. She and her husband, Ed are long-time Mansfield residents. Juanita assisted with many home and museum tours through the years.*

### AN ORIGINAL MEMBER REMEMBERS

I first met Laura as she was walking down the street in our small town of Mansfield. I remember her as wearing a pretty print dress, with small pastel flowers on a light background, and a straw hat trimmed with lavender ribbon. The hat is on display in the museum. Laura impressed me as being a very special lady.

As time went by, I began to wonder why I had not read the "Little House" books. As I read them my desire was to own my own set to read again. By that time, Laura's health was beginning to fail, so she was not seen in town as often. I mentioned to our grocery man that I had bought a set of Laura's books and wished that she would autograph them for me. He suggested that I leave them at the store and he would ask her. How delighted I was when he called and said, "Your books are ready!"

My husband Edward and I were among the original Founder Members of the Laura Ingalls Wilder Home Association. In May of 1957, the first open house was held in Laura's home. Ladies of the Mansfield Garden Club acted as hostesses on a Sunday afternoon. An estimated 500 visited. On October 2, 1958, a meeting was held to elect a permanent board of directors, adopt by-laws and tend to other necessary business. Librarian Florence Williams was appointed custodian of the home to be available to conduct the first tours. Neta Seal was in charge of displaying mementoes. My husband served as Treasurer from 1959 until the 1980s.

Founder Memberships and "Pennies for Laura" from school children all over helped to start the work of this Association. After all the years, how rewarding it is to see the continued interest by both children and adults.



*William Anderson, a teacher from Michigan, has been a board member since 1987, serving in the capacity of vice-president. His interest in the Wilders dates back to his first acquaintance with the "Little House" books in the third grade. His question of "what happened next" led him to much research on the books and their characters. He is the author of magazine articles and books, including the recently*

## ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIPS REVISED

The Wilder Home Association had its start in 1957 with the establishment of \$100 memberships. Over the years, it has developed that many supporters wish to be a part of this work. For that reason, the Association has revised degrees of membership to allow several levels of participation. The membership coupon explains the new program.

We hope to welcome many new members during this kick-off drive. Tell your friends about the membership drive! Join these dedicated people who believe in the ideals and pioneer values of the Wilder writings which emanated from this historic home in the Ozarks.

The Wilder Home Association is a not-for-profit organization with a 501-C-3 classification, and your gift is a charitable contribution.

## JOIN THE WILDER ASSOCIATION

■ **Yes!** I would like to become a member (please check one).

- \$ 5 - \$14 Student
- \$15 - \$49 Individual
- \$50 - \$99 Supporter

*Above are yearly memberships. They entitle bearer to a membership card, two issues of the Association newsletter, Free admission on regular Home and Museum tours and 10% discount on purchases over \$10 in the Museum Bookshop.*



### Lifetime Memberships

- \$ 100-\$ 499 Sponsor
- \$ 500-\$ 999 Patron
- \$1000-\$4999 Donor
- \$5000 - Up Benefactor

*Above memberships are lifetime. They entitle bearer to all benefits of yearly members, plus voting privileges in person or by proxy, at yearly Association meetings. A membership scroll is sent.*

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City, State, \_\_\_\_\_  
Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_

Mail with remittance to:  
**Wilder Home**  
Rt. 1, Box 24  
Mansfield, MO 65704

Continued on Page 4



## ADOPT A PROJECT

Dozens of opportunities exist for restoration and preservation of the artifacts owned by the Association. Some of the antique items and significant literary treasures are in real need of professional restorative attention if they are to be kept for future enjoyment and enhanced to show their original condition.

The Association realizes the great need and has been able to address some of the projects. The Wilder manuscripts in our collection have been de-acidified and preserved; some of the furnishings and ornaments in the Wilder home have been professionally restored. The historic photography preservation project has been started. In many cases, enlarged copies of historic photos are now displayed and the originals stored safely. Pa's fiddle was also restored to playing condition.

Six pieces of significant art have been identified as needing art conservation. These include an oil portrait of Rose Wilder Lane, Elmer Hader's "Telegraph Hill", and W.H.D. Koerner's "Let the Hurricane Roar" painting, used in the *Saturday Evening Post* with Rose's serial of the same name. Three primitive paintings done by Laura as a teen-ager (two of them on tin) were in dangerous state of deterioration. In 1992, these paintings were repaired and stabilized by Bailey Art Conservation Inc. of Kansas City at a cost of \$4,720. This was made possible through a private donation and funds raised by the "Read for Rocky Ridge" Read-a-thon by children in Rochester Hills, Michigan.

Professional restoration services are available at premium prices, but this Association's board feels the need is significant. A list of preservation needs will be compiled in coming months and groups or individuals interested in designating gifts to this purpose are welcomed. At present, designated gifts to the completion of the art conservation project are being solicited. Current quotes for the work are as follows: Rose's portrait, \$2,680; "Telegraph Hill", \$1,140 and "Hurricane", \$1,500.

Board Members continued from Page 3

*published Laura Ingalls Wilder: A Biography.*

### IT STANDS AS THE WILDERS LEFT IT

To me, Rocky Ridge Farm is more than the home of a much loved author and her family. This beautiful wooded site is the spiritual home to many millions of readers who value the principles of the "Little House" books and the lives of the people who lived them.

I first visited the site as a child, and that first awe and amazement at all the Wilder home stands for has never left me. I find it incredible that this historic house is not a restoration or a re-creation; it stands, house and contents, as the Wilders left it. Fortunately, the thirty-six years since Laura Ingalls Wilder left the house seem to have never happened. Touring the Wilder home is almost as if Laura and Almanzo have stepped out for a few minutes.

The good fortune which left the house and its contents intact, places a large responsibility on those who care about the Wilders and their writings. Saving valuable artifacts and maintaining the environment Laura and Almanzo created is, to me, a prime goal. I have no doubt that the "Little House" books will endure, and I hope that the children of coming decades will be able to experience the same awe I felt when I visited Rocky Ridge Farm the first time.



*From Jane Decker, Columbia, Missouri, comes this report on a project she has been working at for several years. Jane is a retired elementary teacher, who still is active in education organizations like the International Reading Association. She is frequently called on to present her program to schools and groups regarding the Wilders and Rocky Ridge Farm.*

### MEMORIAL MARKER PLANNED

In 1988, members of the Missouri State Council of the International Reading Association approved a special project, a permanent memorial marker to be placed on Rocky Ridge Farm! It was left to the committee chairman, Maxine Nolt, a past president of the State Council, and me, to begin raising necessary monies.

Funds for the marker have been donated by school children, parents and teachers. A significant amount was received in response to the slide presentations I have given throughout Missouri and beyond. I have explained the goal of an historic marker for the Wilder farm, which we hope can be placed in a much-needed parking area across from the historic home and museum.

After four years of planning and raising money, we are now ready to complete the project. The marker will be a large, two-sided, metal one, similar to others placed by the Missouri Historical Society around the state. William Anderson will supply text for the marker, which will feature information about the farm.

Exact location for the marker has not yet been determined, but it is hoped that it can be completed this year. To dedicate the marker in 1994, one hundred years after the Wilders arrived in Mansfield, seems very appropriate.



*Roger MacBride lives in Florida. He has been a trustee of the Laura Ingalls Wilder/Rose Wilder Lane Home Association for most of its existence. He was a life-long friend of Rose Wilder Lane, and is the author or editor of eight books. His latest work is Little House on Rocky Ridge, covering the move of the Wilder family from South Dakota to Mansfield and their first months there in 1894. The book is published by HarperCollins in June, 1993.*

### ROSE: MY ADOPTED GRANDMA

Rose was in an informal sense my grandmother: I adopted her and she adopted me. I met her when I was sixteen. My father, an editor of the *Reader's Digest*, was at the time condensing Rose's great novel about hard times, *Let the Hurricane Roar*. One Sunday he took our family to have lunch with her at the White Turkey Inn in Danbury, Connecticut. Fabulous occasion. I was fascinated by her mind and jumped at her offer to correspond. I wrote her, asking, I'm sure, the most naive questions. She patiently replied in ways that gave me new insights. Over a period Rose unfolded for me the meaning of personal liberty and of freedom as part of our nature. She drew on an amazing range of personal experience to express it to me. As a result, I have a very special, personal debt, to Rose which will endure so long as I live.



*Bonnie Appleby was born and raised in southcentral Pennsylvania. For a number of years she worked at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville, and managed a good-sized apartment complex in that city. For the last several years she has lived in Florida, where she works with Roger MacBride as his administrative assistant.*

### INSPIRATION FOR WOMEN TODAY

Many years back I became acquainted with the work of Laura Ingalls Wilder and of her daughter Rose Wilder Lane. I was fascinated by the characters of these two strong-willed women. One was literally a pioneer, traveling across the mid-western part of the United States with her family and was among the first settlers in several regions. Her daughter was a pioneer in the male-dominated world of earlier in this century. She was no Gloria Steinem, but she insisted on being treated on a parity with any man whose job she could equal. And she invariably was. I like to think of both of them as being a considerable inspiration for the women of today.



*Jane Coday grew up in Mansfield. She has served as a tour guide at the Wilder home and now is a board member.*

### OUR FAMILY SHARES IN WILDER LORE

When Laura and Almanzo arrived in Mansfield in 1894, my ancestors were here to greet them. My relatives were pioneer merchants and bankers who knew the diminutive author and her "man of the place" as fellow citizens and neighbors.

Now, almost one hundred years and many books later, Mrs. Wilder is an internationally known author, and her stories are acclaimed for their historical significance, as well as being considered great children's literature.

Continued on Page 5



happily filled the grounds on the beautiful fall day. 79-year old Garth signed hundreds of books for long lines of autograph seekers.



*Crowds gather on the lawn for Garth Williams Day.*

•Purchase of several acres of land directly across from the Home and Museum entrance gate was also completed this year. This included the building which



*Presentation of bronze plaque signifying the Laura Ingalls Wilder Home as a National Landmark. Association President Jean Coday is seen with Thomas Griffiths of the National Park Service.*

formerly held the Rocky Ridge Shop. The area was immediately put into service as a parking site, with development to come.

## 1992

•Much-needed office space, storage and warehouse area was appreciated in a converted space in the Curator's Home. Studies were started on a plan for restoration for the 1928 Rock House and development for better parking, added bathroom facilities and easier access to the historic site for all visitors. The Wilder collection of vintage recordings was transferred to tape and catalogued; Pa's fiddle and the Wilder organ were recorded professionally.

•1992 culminated with a second fall special event, National Landmark Day. On October 17, before a large crowd on the west lawn, a Department of the Interior representative officially presented a plaque designating the Wilder Home as a "National Historic Landmark". Visitors who came from many states included famous Missouri-born author of children's books, Clyde Robert Bulla.

•Over 43,000 visited the site in 1992.

## 1993 and Beyond

•Handicapped bathrooms were created in the Museum building and a temporary parking lot and bathrooms were completed across the road from the main entrance gate. Continued restoration, preservation, access to the upstairs at the Wilder House and renovation of the Rock House are of prime concern to the Board of Directors. With time, careful study and financial support, these dreams will become reality.

## NEW IN THE BOOKSHOP

***Laura Ingalls Wilder: A Biography* by William Anderson**  
(HarperCollins, 240 pages, \$16.00)



After reading all of Laura Ingalls Wilder's "Little House" books, many of her fans often wistfully wish that there was still more to learn about Laura and her family. When William Anderson read the stories in elementary school and wanted to know more, he set about satisfying his curiosity

by researching the Wilder and Ingalls families. Along the way he helped in the development of the Wilder sites at De Smet, South Dakota and Mansfield, Missouri. He also shared the fruits of his research with the vast army of Laura's admirers in his various writings. Now comes ***Laura Ingalls Wilder: A Biography*** which serves as a kind of culmination of his work.

There is much about the book to praise. It puts in chronological order the events recounted by Laura in her various books. It fills in the gaps and satisfies our desire to know how Laura spent the rest of her days after settling in Mansfield

with Manly and Rose. We learn about what happened to Ma and Pa Ingalls and the rest of her family. Equally important, I think Anderson somehow captured the spirit of Laura's writing style. As I read the biography, I felt as if Laura were telling her own stories once again.

There are bonuses in the wonderful photographs, some never before published, maps showing Ingalls and Wilder homesites and places of interest and Rocky Ridge farm, and an Index.

Although the biography is aimed at young readers, there is much for Laura's adult fans to ponder. All in all, ***Laura Ingalls Wilder: A Biography*** is a good book, worthy of a place next to Laura's stories on the shelves of the legions of Wilder fans everywhere.

*Reviewed by Ann Tompert.*

*Ann Tompert is the well-known author of many children's books, including The Silver Whistle. Her latest picture books are Bamboo Hats and A Rice Cake and Just a Little Bit.*

## POSTAL SERVICE TO HONOR WILDER WRITINGS

The U.S. Postal Service will issue a "Youth Classics" book of 29¢ stamps in October of 1993. The books to be honored will be *Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm*, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, *Little Women*, and *Little House on the Prairie*.

Seeking Postal Service recognition of Laura's writing has been an ongoing project since 1966. The idea of a commemorative postage stamp was originated by Juliana Davis, a Founder Member of this Association who now lives in Rochester Hills, Michigan.



Our Family Shares... Continued from Page 4

My role with the Wilder Association began when I was five years old as the ground breaker at the museum dedication ceremony. Over the past twenty-three years I have seen Rocky Ridge grow from a small community effort to preserve Mrs. Wilder's home, to a national landmark.

Both of my parents have served in several positions with the Association, volunteering a great deal of their time over the last two decades to the development and growth of the Association.

As a member of the Wilder Association, it is very gratifying for me to have a role in preserving Rocky Ridge and sharing Laura's memory and works with the thousands of visitors who come each season.



## MANSFIELD TO ERECT WILDER STATUE

Laura Ingalls Wilder's image will be displayed with other bronze busts in the Missouri State Capitol in Jefferson City, and the community of Mansfield will also honor the author with a special casting.

New York sculptor William J. Williams visited the Wilder Home collecting data for his project in 1992. "I will try to capture Laura's age at the time she did her writing," he said.



Mansfield expressed interest in a second casting of Williams' work immediately after learning of the project. A local committee, with sponsorship of the Mansfield Lions Club, selected the town square park as a suitable site to honor the famous local resident.

Funds were generated for the bust, shipping and placement. It is expected that the dedication of this honor to Laura in her home community of 63 years will occur in Fall, 1993, on the eve of the hundredth year anniversary of the Wilder family's arrival in town.

## NEW RECORDINGS RELEASED

For years, we do not know how many, Pa's fiddle was silent and not in a playable condition. In 1991, curator Connie Tidwell transported the fiddle to a St. Louis music expert for an evaluation and routine maintenance to render it playable. It proved to have a beautiful "voice" and was publicly heard for the first time at the Association's "Garth Williams Day" on the museum grounds in October, 1991. This chance for the public to listen to the fiddle has been repeated at two "Wilder Days" functions, and again at "Landmark Day" at the Museum in October, 1992. Laura's written wish for the fiddle to be played several times per year is now being honored.

The next step was logical; Pa's fiddle was recorded for the many interested people who cannot journey to Mansfield. As many readers know, Mansfield is located near the famous music mecca of Branson, Missouri. A fine professional recording studio there took over the intricate job of expertly recording both the fiddle and the Wilder organ, which were transported there under supervision of Curator Tidwell.

The result are two high quality cassette



*Pa's fiddle played by  
Rod Smith.*

tapes, now published exclusively by the Association. The first is "Laura Ingalls Wilder Speaks", a rare voice interview with Laura, along with a medley of Pa's fiddle music. The second is "Laura Ingalls Wilder's Songs from Home", a documentary production. The latter features the fiddle, the organ, performances of songs Laura loved (included is one she wrote!), historic broadcasts and a narration to tie it all together. The tapes are available from the museum bookstore.

A special thanks to all the volunteer work by singers and musicians that enhance the new recordings.

New In The Bookshop continued from Page 5

**MUSICAL MEMORIES OF LAURA INGALLS WILDER**  
(Hear & Learn Productions, Cassette tape pack with 53 page book, \$20.00)

Anyone who has read Wilder's "Little House" books knows how much the Ingalls family loved to sing, always accompanied by Pa on the fiddle, of course.

The book includes the words and music to some of the songs they sang, explaining a bit about each, with beautiful illustrations, including the paintings of Harvey Dunn and photographs of the Ingalls family.

Beautifully performed with historically correct instruments, the songs include kids' favorites like "Pop! Goes the Weasel", toe tappers like "Buffalo Gals" and "Wait for the Wagon", and gospels like "Sweet By and By".

Just try to keep a dry eye through the sentimental favorite, "Rock Me To Sleep", which laments the loss of a mother's love and begins:

"Backward turn backward, Oh time in thy flight, Make me a child again just for tonight."

I'd recommend this book and tape to Laura fans... (from the *Rapid City Journal*, May 16, 1993)

**THE LAURA INGALLS WILDER SONGBOOK**  
by Eugenia Garson

(HarperCollins, 160 pages, \$19.00)

This is a re-issue of the 1968 volume of 63 of the favorite songs mentioned in the "Little House" books. Research for many of these obscure lyrics was done among the collection of historic songbooks in the Wilder home. Arrangements in this book are suited for piano and guitar.

(These books and all others by Laura Ingalls Wilder and Rose Wilder Lane are available at the Little House Bookshop on the museum grounds. Profits help support the work of the Association.)

**Laura Ingalls Wilder - Rose Wilder Lane**  
**Home & Museum**  
Rt. 1 Box 24  
Mansfield, MO 65704

